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ABSTRACT

A study examined the negative impacts of forensics upon primary relationships and family life. The study was designed to assess the professional and personal concerns of active forensics coaches. Subjects were seven males and four females, nine of whom were married, five of whom have children, and only one of whom reported having a spouse or partner involved with forensics. Of the eleven, eight were full-time faculty members, two were part-time faculty, and one was a community volunteer. Respondents were asked to provide answers to a host of questions pertaining to their professional backgrounds, the nature of their forensics involvement, the criteria they employed in choosing tournaments to attend, and their overall assessment of forensics activities' positive and negative aspects. The survey instrument was a three-part questionnaire. Results indicated that the item receiving the strongest level of agreement is that tournaments are too demanding physically, followed closely by forensic coaching salaries are too low. Findings suggest that the item the respondents disagreed with the most was that students are not as much fun to work with as they used to be, followed by actively considering getting out of forensics. (Contains 16 references and three tables of data; a sample survey questionnaire is appended.) (Author/CR)

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FORENSICS AND FAMILY: ATTEMPTING TO AVOID THE COLLISION: AN ASSESSMENT STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF FORENSICS UPON QUALITY OF LIFE FOR FAMILIES, COUPLES, AND INDIVIDUALS.

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the negative impacts of forensics upon primary relationships and family life. Respondents were asked to provide answers to a host of questions pertaining to their professional backgrounds, the nature of their forensics involvement, the criteria they employed in choosing tournaments to attend, and their overall assessment of the activities positive and negative aspects. The survey instrument for this study was developed by Susan and Scott Millsap and a slightly revised version was utilized in collecting data for this project. The researchers wanted to determine to what extent forensics activities negatively impact family or relational interaction and overall quality of life.

COLLISION 3

FAMILIES AND FORENSICS: AVOIDING THE COLLISION.

INTRODUCTION

Working with students in a competitive setting represents both an exhilarating and exhausting experience because of the significant amounts of time and energy expended to cultivate and maintain extracurricular programs. The world of intercollegiate forensics poses myriad burdens upon coaches who seek to strike a balance between their work and a desire to preserve some semblance of a home life beyond the activity. During a typical tournament season, forensic coaches routinely spend numerous weekends away from their families or partners while still balancing the traditional duties of academic life during the weekdays including teaching, committee work, community service, and scholarly research.

There are several inherent problems associated with the nature of forensics competition which promote a startlingly high rate of professional burnout and relational deterioration (CEDA Assessment Conference, 1990). First and foremost, forensics involves a tremendous expenditure of time and cultivating the hours necessary to administer a program well involves reallocating energy from other personal and professional commitments. In turn, this reallocation of personal time to meet professional obligations places a negative stress upon the coach's family, friends, and associates who are forced to pick up the slack in their absence. The most common chronological crunch occurs when coaching responsibilities begin to predominate over personal commitments and the quality time required to preserve domestic and relational harmony evaporates. The forensics community generally ignores the potential harm to primary relationships caused by the natural strictures promoted within the profession. Consequently, few journal articles have analyzed the problems associated with professional burnout and familial dissolution in great depth. Most of the discussion occurs in Listserv units sponsored by the various forensics organizations including those provided by Phi Rho Pi, CEDA, AFA, and the NDT. Similarly, the proceedings of various forensics conferences (e.g. Sedalia, 1974; 1984 Developmental Conference at Northwestern; the 1990 CEDA Assessment Conference) offer a much richer discussion of the positive and negative aspects of forensics coaching and its impact on spouses, domestic partners, significant others, and children.

The problems most commonly attributed to the structural elements of forensics coaching include poor remuneration, a lack of professional respect within the discipline, unrealistic workloads given the travel commitments, and the physical and psychological toll of spending days and weeks on the road away from hearth and home (e.g. lousy food, mind numbing judging schedules, relentless tournament schedules, and lack of adequate rest). In addition, coaches also complain that a

lack of resources (e.g. you don't really need an Internet hookup do you?) and a lack of strong professional support (e.g. she's just a speech coach, not a real scholar) within their home departments. In reviewing the literature concerning forensics and family we will summarize analytical discussions and essays which address three interrelated issues associated with the collision between the personal and professional worlds of debate and forensics coaches. Those three areas encompass concerns related to 1) The purpose and educational value of forensics, 2) Resource allocation among programs of varying size and stature, 3) Working conditions for coaches and program administrators.

REVIEW OF PRIMARY LITERATURE

THE VALUE OF FORENSICS

Initially, we will review works which focus upon the purpose and educational value of forensics as a co-curricular activity for college students. Even as early as 1960 the phenomenon of professional burnout among debate educators was a topic for discussion in the forensics journals (Haston, Fall 1960; Rives and Klopf, February 1965). During that period, the authors leveled primary blame for the problem upon the poor professional training and lack of job security commonly offered to those who chose to coach speech and debate teams for a living. But, there was no mention of the emotional drain imposed upon the families and significant others by the sheer demands of the profession. Bruce Haston (1960) defined the forensics tournament as "a tension situation..normally there is much effort and practice associated with preparing to compete and..tournament judging is fraught with problems." Nearly thirty years later, Thomas Steinfatt, a former debater and Professor of Communication at the University of Miami (FL) condemned CEDA debate as a contrived forum where rapid fire delivery styles are prized above and beyond the development of critical thinking skills (CEDA Yearbook, 1990). Steinfatt went on to suggest that the quality of debate might improve if speakers were given no prep time, discouraged from wholesale exhibitions of their ability to "speed read," rewarded for focusing upon resolutional rather than procedural issues, and provided with an extensive oral critique after each and every round. Several of these suggestions have emerged as traditional elements of two alternative argument forms, public forum debate (NEDA) and parliamentary debates (PDA).

Conversely, a number of other authors have examined the core benefits of participating in intercollegiate forensics competition. Hill (1993) cautioned that the results of several debater vs. non-debater critical thinking assessments did not provide proof that debate promoted positive educational outcomes associated with evaluative reasoning ability (CEDA Yearbook, 1993). Yet, this claim is routinely bandied about by forensics coaches, student competitors, and past participants as one of the chief benefits gleaned from their participation in the activity. Several studies confirm that forensics provides participants with a unique experiential

learning opportunity (Weiss, 1973, 1990; CEDA Assessment, 1991; Sellnow, 1994). Sellnow suggests forensics participation moves learning from "fragmented, classroom instruction" to a dynamic form of life-long learning perpetuated upon the knowledge frameworks of the student-speakers engaged in tournament competition (NFA Journal-Winter 1994). Miles and others (1972) contend that forensics provides an important educational outlet for the socially and economically disadvantaged student who dropped out of high school or lacked the economic impetus to attend college in a traditional setting (e.g. trade school, community college, or night school programs). The authors suggest these students benefit most from forensics because they are exposed to a wide array of social experiences and competitive opportunities which are not available in traditional classroom settings.

Kevin Jones (1994) followed up on an earlier study by Hill (1982) which sought to answer the query "why do students become involved in intercollegiate debate activities?" Jones found that the development of argumentation strategies and critical thinking skills were cited by both NDT and CEDA debaters as the most important reasons they participated in intercollegiate debate. Winning rounds was listed as a secondary concern and well behind the benefits gained from engaging in what Jones termed "cerebral gymnastics." Interestingly, Jones concluded that forensics directors might be better served to offer more on-campus activities for students interested in exercising their intellectual and analytical capabilities, instead of focusing exclusively upon competitive, travel intensive debate activities.

Several other authors have proposed significant changes in the procedures employed to conduct and administer forensics tournaments. Milton Dobkin (1958) suggests DOF's should follow a "citizenship model" in judging, managing student conduct, and interacting with their peers within the atmosphere of tournament competition. Dobkin viewed the teaching of ethical behavior and proper conduct through example as the most important benefits offered through involvement in intercollegiate speech activities (Western Speech, Fall 1958). Gow (1967) offered the then revolutionary notion that "the game of debate" be reconfigured in order to impose significant penalties upon debaters who engage in evidence manipulation or interactive abuse of less skilled opponents (JAFA, Fall 1967).

Over the years, numerous authors have suggested that forensics and debate be more tightly connected to real world influences and concerns. Douglas (1971) encouraged coaching professionals to establish retreats or academic courses where experts from various debate topic-related fields could gather to share their expertise with debaters and speech majors in small group settings. In that same year, Joseph Wenzel (1971) promoted the concept of campus and community-wide public forums in order to cultivate a greater appreciation among students for the rhetorical tradition within the framework of real world interactions. Ronald Matlon (1970; 1971; 1972) repeatedly argued for greater openness and veracity by tournament

directors in the advertisement and promotion of their tournaments. Specifically, Matlon outlined a code demanding that DOF's clearly and distinctly spell out the standards for divisional competition (e.g. entrance rules of novice debaters), the judging requirements for coaches, the level of competition to be expected, and the rules pertaining to evidence usage and documentation.

James McBath, a renowned debate theorist, characterized debate as a valuable activity which synthesizes competition with the development of communication skills. McBath went on to detail the numerous advantages to be gained from student involvement in forensics: 1) Develops skills that are valued by society (reading, researching, critical thinking, constructive argumentation), 2) Provides useful career preparation in terms of rational thinking processes and communication capabilities, 3) Encourages students to clarify their personal and social values through confronting the value judgments of others, 4) Provides enriched academic course offerings through in-depth exposure to literature, public advocacy case studies, and contemporary thought and philosophy, and 5) Provides students with an opportunity to develop social skills and team building talents (2nd National Conference on Forensics, 1984). These issues may, upon first blush, appear somewhat unrelated to the quality of life issues addressed in our study, but the ethical parameters associated with forensics practice also influence the realm of family and relational life.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

For over a decade James Klopf and James McCroskey conducted surveys designed to assess the size and scope of forensics programs throughout the United States (JAFA, Winter 1968; Fall 1975). Their results revealed that most forensics directors were designated as tenure track faculty and that roughly 40% were able to rely on the services of graduate assistants to help with the coaching and the administration of their respective programs. Clearly, the lack of adequate staffing and funding helps promote professional burnout and can contribute significantly to the cultivation of relational discord and deterioration of domestic support networks. Some departments fail to develop a well thought out job description for the DOF position and, consequently, the forensics "coach" winds up being assigned tasks which contribute to a burdensome workload. Some departments place unreasonable expectations upon the forensics educator by demanding they reach a highly competitive stature while failing to provide them with adequate financial support in the form of scholarships and travel funds. Still others require the DOF to shoulder a full teaching load while providing no release time or additional remuneration for the travel and preparation time traditionally associated with running a successful forensics program.

More recently, the interrelated issues of travel, salaries, support staff, and academic release time for forensics Directors was revisited by Rogers (1991) and

Murphy (1992) (CEDA Yearbook 1991; CEDA Yearbook, 1992). Rogers' study found that the average "successful program" (e.g. defined as those finishing among the regional "Top 10" during the 1987 season): 1) Served an average of 19 students, 2) Attended an average of 17 tournaments including CEDA Nationals, 3) 75% of these programs were provided with scholarships and allowed to offer academic credit in exchange for debate participation, 4) 44% had at least one graduate assistant, and 5) The average salary for regional Directors was $31, 190.00, and 6)Overall, only 33% of those surveyed identified their posts as "tenure track."

Thomas Murphy (1992) conducted a similar survey which focused upon the staffing, budgeting, and participation rates of CEDA debate programs. Murphy found that nearly 55% of those responding identified themselves as "tenure track" faculty and over 50% reported they lacked the services of even a single graduate assistant. Program budget size ranged from a low of $6,000 to a high of $70,000 and a mean average funding level of $24,100 for the 32 programs responding to the survey. Interestingly, the average salary for these respondents was $28,200.00, a figure just slightly below the average calculated in Rogers' study. 22 of the 32 programs surveyed also acknowledged their participation in Individual Events in addition to their active involvement in CEDA debate. Interestingly, 12 other programs described themselves as active participants in public forum and community sponsored debates, which signals a trend toward more campus-centered forensics activities. This respondent group also detailed a wide latitude of participation in CEDA ranging from a low of 7 tournaments to a high of 25. The median average for the schools surveyed was 15 tournaments per season.

These results highlight several inherent problems within the basic resource structure of intercollegiate forensics. First, there is a large dichotomy between those who enjoy a high level of funding and abundant personnel support from their departments and those who muddle through with meager budgets and virtually nonexistent staff support from their respective institutions. This grand disparity may place some individuals in an extreme bind, caught between their need to promote competitive success while balancing scholarly and parental/relational responsibilities. Similarly, those DOF's who teach and coach in non-tenure track positions may experience stresses directly related to their tenuous professional status and lack of respect and recognition from colleagues. These results underscore key problems in the areas of: 1) Program focus as several DOF's reported administering both debate and IE program activities and travel fatigue given the median average of 15 tournaments a season. This tournament travel average also translates into a minimum of 30 days of personal productivity and family time lost due to travel to and from forensics events (this estimate presumes most debate contests run for only two days, while excluding travel days from this calculation). Overall, the family and relational lives of forensics director's are clearly made much more difficult when sponsoring departments fail to provide reasonable resources in terms of staffing,

travel funding, and professional release tine.

WORKING CONDITIONS

In this final section, we review studies examining the nature of the forensics workplace and its influence upon the Director's quality of life. The Proceedings from the 20th Anniversary CEDA Assessment Conference detail several lively discussions concerning the abusive and inhumane structure of debate tournaments including: burdensome judging schedules; lousy and unhealthful food; tense, erratic, and irresponsible behavior directed at judges/coaches by students; inadequate periods for rest between rounds; A lack of opportunity for productive interaction between coaches; A lack of interaction with students for the purposes of giving feedback and suggestions for improvement during debate rounds (Thomas & Wood, 1993).

In that same compendium, Steve Hunt (1993) contends that debate directors are hindered severely from achieving professional advancement when they receive inadequate secretarial help, ambiguous job descriptions upon hiring, a lack of release time, and the overall length of the forensics season. In addition, Hunt describes the inhumanity of the tournament experience:

> "We need more humane tournaments. We need tournaments with enough judges so that judges can have some time off to coach their students, write ballots, or eat and relax between rounds. We tournaments that serve healthy food for refreshments, fruit and vegetables, crackers, juices etc. We need tournaments that schedule in real meal breaks. We need tournaments that allow for decent rest at night. If this means fewer tournaments over a longer time or fewer rounds at a tournament or more money to hire judges so be it." (Avoiding the Burnout of CEDA Educators, 1993, p. 177).

Hunt concludes his essay by suggesting these changes be implemented at the organizational level by CEDA and other forensics organizations.

Bill Balthrop (1996), a former NDT coach at the University of North Carolina, stressed the need for coaches to live well rounded lives where connections to the academy and social spheres of life are not lost in the quest for tournament success. Like Hunt, Balthrop (Quail Roost Report, 1995) also suggested that a well-rounded and detailed tenure policy for forensics coaches be adopted in order to perpetuate greater potential for individuals to achieve a balance between professional and personal success.

Overall, we see that the life of a forensics coach is often a cluttered and disordered mess because structural and institutional barriers conspire against them to wreak havoc with their private needs and personal responsibilities. This study is

designed to identify which elements of the forensics infrastructure are most problematic and to assess the impact of forensics upon the quality of family/relational life.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This pilot study was designed to assess the professional and personal concerns of active forensics coaches. We define a forensics coach as any individual who is designated to attend debate or individual tournaments on behalf of their respective institutions in order to fulfill either coaching or judging commitments. The measurement instrument contains multiple choice, rating based, and open-ended items and was developed by Scott and Susan Millsap of Otterbein College for use in an earlier project. Gary Deaton developed an open ended items section to provide clarity to responses provided in the closed-ended segment and Bob Glenn modified the ratings section by adding three additional categories and revising the items in order to make them less gender and more relational descriptive.

METHODOLOGY

In order to discuss ways to avoid the collision between forensics and family, we wanted to assess what coaches/directors perceive to be advantages and disadvantages of their assignment, how they evaluate their role overall, and what factors influenced individual's perceptions of and satisfaction with their role.

Specifically, we wanted to answer the following:

RQ1: What factors are most strongly related to satisfaction with the role of forensics coach/DOF?
RQ2: What factors are most closely related to dissatisfaction with the role of forensics coach/DOF?
RQ3: Do family commitments play a role in determining forensics travel schedules?

In order to gather information relative to these questions we constructed a three part questionnaire. The first part provided demographic information about the respondents, including their age range, gender, marital status, parental status, and position assignment. We also asked how many tournaments a respondent's team traveled to each year and how many the respondent traveled to. Additionally, we asked if the coach's spouse/partner was involved in forensics.

The second section of the questionnaire asked respondents to complete two scales. The first was a ranking of a list of ten items in terms of their relative influence on the decision to travel to a tournament. The criteria included were budgetary constraints, ability of team to be competitive, past experiences at a tournament, non-forensics aspects of coach's job, family obligations, need to spend

time on outside interests or lobbies, non-academic work obligations, religious beliefs, and tournament travel distance. We also included an "other" category and asked respondents to specify what other criteria might be used.

The second scale was a series of Likert scale items that asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement (O=don't know, 1=SD, 2=D, 3=neither A or D, 4=A, 5=SA). Statements included references to reducing involvement with forensics or getting out altogether, concerns about workload, student interaction, salary, the impact on professional development, physical demands, and the impact on privacy relationships.

The final section of the survey included 2 open-ended questions. Respondents were asked to discuss the greatest advantages and greatest disadvantages of coaching forensics.

RESULTS

Permission was obtained to run the pilot study at the Governor's Cup Tournament which is usually well attended by a variety of programs. Eleven usable surveys were returned. While this is a small sample it did serve the purpose of pointing out weaknesses in the instruments to be corrected for future use as well as some interesting results providing justification for further study.

As is reported in Table 1 the sample consists of 7 males and 4 females, 9 of which are married. Five have children and only one reported a spouse or partner as involved with forensics. The number of tournaments that teams traveled to in a year ranged from zero to 12 with an average of 8. The number of tournaments attended by the respondents had the same range but an average of 7. Most of the respondents attend all of the tournaments that their team attends. Eight of the 11 respondents were full-time faculty members and 2 were part-time faculty with one community volunteer.

Respondents were asked to rank order items relating to how they decide to attend a tournament. There were ten items, however an error in the instructions asked the respondents to rank the items 1 to 7 which resulted in some numbers being used more than once. Even though the validity of this item is questionable there were some interesting results which deserve further investigation. Keeping in mind that a one indicated the most important criterion, while a 7 would indicate the criteria were of little significance, the most important reason for deciding to attend a tournament (other than the one person who wrote in University Calendar as a concern) was "budgetary constraints," with a mean of 2.9. A close second, however, was "Family obligations" (3.0). "Religious beliefs" (3.22), "Tournament travel distance" (3.3), and "Need to spend time on outside interests (4.0) rounded out the

top five. Close behind the concern for outside interests were "Non-forensics aspects of my job" (4.1), and "Past experience at this tournament" (4.2). The least important reasons listed were "Non-academic work obligations" (5.5) and "Ability to be competitive at this tournament" (5.77). We suspect this last number may have been influenced by the instrument being administered at a NEDA tournament, since NEDA is an organization that de-emphasizes competition and probably attracts coaches who are enamored of that philosophy.

TABLE 1
TABLE 2

Respondents were then asked to indicate their level of agreement on items designed to determine their motivation for involvement in forensics. As Table 3 indicates the item receiving the strongest level of agreement is tournaments are too demanding physically (mean 4.3) followed closely by forensic coaching salaries are too low (4.2). The item which respondents disagreed with the most was that students are not as fun as they used to be to work with (2.7) followed by actively considering getting out of forensics (3.0).

TABLE 3

Correlations were then run on the variables at a .05 level of significance. As would be expected from the previous discussion of the sample there is a high correlation between the number of tournaments a team attends and the number attended by the respondent (.947 $p>.0001$).

When looking at motivation there is a moderate to strong relationship between forensics involving too much work on weekends and considering reduction of forensics involvement (.75 $p>.007$) as well as between it would be better for my family if I were out of forensics and being better for my primary relationship if I were out of forensics (.85 $p>.001$). The variable that correlated with the most items is the salary for people in forensics coaching is too low. This item is significantly related to tournaments are too physically demanding (.82 $p>.001$), forensics involves too much work on the weekends (.69 $p>.01$), it would be better for my family if I were out of forensics (.67 $p>.02$), it would be better for my primary relationship (.68 $p>.02$), and have considered getting out of forensics (.60 $p>.04$).

Respondents were also asked to respond to two open ended questions on the greatest advantages and disadvantages of working in forensics/debate? On greatest advantages there were four responses dealing with greater interaction with students, three responses dealing with being able to watch students develop and succeed, working with brighter students, traveling is fun, and increasing their own communication and research abilities. There were two responses dealing with

greater interaction with coaches, success leads to merit pay and/or promotion, and forensics keeps you young. There was one response on an increase of office support.

For the greatest disadvantages, there were six comments dealing with stress on the family, three with physical exhaustion and poor recognition of forensics on their campuses, two comments dealing with long hours, budgets, politics among schools, salary, travel, losing touch with campus life. There was one comment on the emotional involvement is constant, gone on weekends, and students being treated unjustly by judges.

ANALYSIS

RQ1

Most of the factors related to satisfaction were student related. Twice as many respondents disagreed that students were less fun than they used to be than agreed with that statement. There were 10 student-centered comments in the open-ended question about advantages. A second area of benefit appears to be personal growth and development, although there was a lot more ambivalence here. Respondents obviously believe that forensics involvement includes too much weekend work and that they could advance professionally by getting out of forensics. However, coaches also responded that forensics kept them young (2) and helped develop their own communication and research skills (3). Two respondents also indicated potential pay and/or promotion benefits from success in forensics, while two responses also suggested interacting with other coaches was an additional source of satisfaction.

RQ2

Six (or 50%) of the respondents indicated that stress on the family was one of the greatest disadvantages and a significant majority agreed that their primary relationship, their family, and their children would be better off if they were not involved in forensics. Both the Likert scales and the open-ended responses indicated that lack of adequate compensation, lack of respect, and physical demands were all major causes of dissatisfaction.

RQ3

Other than the one person who wrote in "campus calendar" as a reason for choosing to go to a tournament, the two most significant reasons offered were budgetary constraints (mean of 2.9 with one being most important) and family obligations (3.0). Family obligations and non-forensics aspects of the coach's job were also the only two reasons that no one ranked as least important on the 1-7 scale. This would suggest that family obligations are an important concern in determining travel schedules. Besides concerns of family and budget, the only reasons to achieve a mean ranking of less than four were Religious Beliefs (3.22) and Distance to the tournament (3.3). Distance to the tournament would also seem to

affect a number of other aspects, including ability to spend time with family, to practice one's religious beliefs in organized ways, and the amount of budget money spent. In short, the most important area was budget, the next group of concerns were family and personal issues, and the least important concerns were tournament related (previous experience and competitiveness).

DISCUSSION

What we found among the population we studied is that the topic of this paper, i.e., avoiding the collision between forensics and family, is a significant one. We were reminded that forensics directors and coaches feel underappreciated, underpaid, and underbudgeted, and that this does not decrease the expectations that administrators and students have. Thus, the potential for collision certainly exists. Yet, our survey also indicates that the respondents enjoy and value what they do and find working with students in this activity highly rewarding. For most of those we polled (and, we suspect, for much of the potential population for a broader study), leaving the activity is not the answer (besides, this would be "withdrawing" from the conflict which we teach as a passive and destructive method of resolution in our interpersonal classes). So, how do we avoid the collision?

As any good persuasive speaker can tell you, the solution is on multiple levels. Of course, in order to operationalize any of these, it will require that forensics directors/coaches be proactive. One area of importance would seem to be administration. If we can help administration to alter their perceptions about the requirements of the activity in terms of effort and budgetary needs, we can make our lives easier. This may seem impossible, but it has happened. Some administrators have found exit surveys of graduating students to be compelling with regard to the need for increased budgets. Some Directors have been able to convince department or university administrators to travel to a tournament or two with them and experience the rigors of the road first hand. There is also a growing effort among forensics educators and forensics journals to provide information about the role and requirements of Directors and Coaches.

A second group that might be able to help lighten the load would be alumni. We found that here was almost a one to one correlation between the number of tournaments attended by a squad and the number of tournaments attended by the Director/Coach. While this makes sense and may seem to be the natural order of things, it is not necessarily the only way to run a program. Students we have coached, who have traveled with us and who know how we do things, who we trust and respect can provide a buffer to the all or nothing approach that suggests we must go everywhere our teams go. This may be almost a necessity for coaches who run a program alone that competes in both debate and individual events.

Otherwise, it will reach a point where we will have to choose between reducing the number of tournament experiences that our students enjoy and driving ourselves beyond what is healthy for ourselves and the important relationships in our lives.

Our current students can also be instrumental in making the coaching experience more manageable. Peer coaching and leadership lessen the psychological responsibility and the chronological commitment necessary to be effective as a coach. It also helps to involve students in the decision making process regarding how many tournaments and which ones a squad will attend. We can lessen their dependence on us while increasing the value of their overall educational benefit accrued from forensics by helping them to take responsibility not only for themselves, but also for each other and for the squad as an entity. If we host tournaments, this is another crucial time to utilize our team members to help us.

The organizations that support forensics activity can also participate in decreasing our role conflict by finding ways to make the season manageable. This is, however, a difficult task to manage because there are contradictory ways to accomplish the same goal. One method, utilized, for instance, by NEDA, is to control the number of tournaments offered during the year. This is extremely helpful for those who only compete in this form of debate. Of course, schools involved in individual events as well may still have a hard time controlling their schedule. A competing model would be to offer more tournaments such that there would be a sufficient number available during the year that are within a reasonable travel distance. A potential problem here would be that all tournaments are not created equal in terms of events available and level of competition. It might be difficult to meet our educational goals or our administration's competitiveness goals without skipping closer tournaments to attend those farther afield.

We should also make every effort to involve those who are important to us in our personal lives in our professional lives. It is helpful to seek input from those who will be affected by our absences when we are shaping our tournament calendar for the year. Moreover, it would be evn better if our spouses/partners and family members were actively involved in our program. Help with administration, coaching, judging, or whatever we and they feel comfortable having them do would make forensics a bond rather than a barrier. One way this could be facilitated would be if tournaments could find ways to be more family friendly places. Of course, this is one area in which budgets become a concern again. If tournament hosts could afford to hire more judges and use coaches less, or if coaches could afford to pay people to go to tournaments with them and judge for them part of the time, that would help facilitate a more congenial environment.

CONCLUSION

In this study we have examined the ways that forensics and family intersect with one another. We found that this is a very relevant and important topic, analyzed its place in the larger issues of forensics coaching, and made some suggestions as to how to avoid this "collision." We hope to follow this pilot study with a larger study that looks at more of the variables of satisfaction and tries to establish more broadly generalizable conclusions. In the meantime, we hope to avoid any crashes of our own!

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TABLE 1

Description of Research Sample

Obs.	Age Group	Sex	Marital Status	# of Children	Partner Involvement	# of Tourn. Team attends	# of Tourn. Respon. attends	Position
1	40-49	F	Married	2	yes	0	0	Com Vol
2	40-49	M	Married	1	no	8	8	FT Fac
3	60+	M	Married	0	no	8	8	FT Fac
4	50-59	F	Married	0	no	6	5	FT Fac
5	22-29	M	Married	0	no	7	7	FT Fac
6	30-39	M	Single	0	no	12	12	FT Fac
7	50-59	M	Dom Part	1	no	6	.	PT Fac
8	40-49	F	Married	2	no	11	8	FT Fac
9	30-39	F	Married	0	no	8	8	FT Fac
10	50-59	M	Married	0	no	10	8	FT Fac
11	30-39	M	Married	2	no	10	10	FT Fac

TABLE 2

Item Means for Deciding to Attend a Tournament

Item	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Budgetary constraints	1.00	7.00	2.90
Ability to be competitive at this tournament	3.00	7.00	5.77
Past experience at this tournament	1.00	7.00	4.20
Non-forensic aspects of my job	1.00	6.00	4.10
Family obligations	1.00	6.00	3.00
Need to spend time on outside interests	1.00	7.00	4.00
Non-academic work obligations	2.00	7.00	5.50
Religious beliefs	1.00	7.00	3.22
Tournament travel distance	1.00	7.00	3.30
Other (Academic Calendar)	2.00	2.00	2.00

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TABLE 3

Level of agreement no motivation for forensic involvement

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
Reduce Involvement	1	1	0	4	5	4.00
Considered Getting out	2	1	1	3	4	3.54
Actively pursued getting out	3	1	3	1	3	3.00
Too much weekend work	1	0	3	4	3	3.72
Students not as fun	1	5	3	1	2	2.72
Salary too low	1	0	0	4	6	4.27
Advance profes ionally by getting out of forensics	0	1	3	5	2	3.54
Better for primary relationship	0	1	0	5	4	4.20
Better for my family if out	0	0	3	4	4	4.09
Better for my children if out	0	1	3	3	4	3.90
Tournaments are too demanding physically	1	0	0	3	7	4.36

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THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING OUR SURVEY. ONCE COMPLETE PLEASE RETURN TO THE BALLOT TABLE.
ALL RESPONSES ARE ANONYMOUS AND CONFIDENTIAL.

Please check the appropriate response:

Age_____22-29. _____30-39. _____40-49. _____50-59.

_____60+.

Gender: _____Male _____Female

Marital Status: _____Single _____Married _____Divorced

_____Domestic Partnered _____Separated

Number of Children Living in the home: _____.

Is your spouse/partner involved in forensics _____.

How many tournaments does your team travel to in a forensic year? _____.

Of those tournaments how many do you travel to? _____.

My position is as: _____ Full-time faculty member

_____ Part-time Faculty member.

_____ Part time Faculty/Full-time Employee

_____ Graduate Assistant

_____ Community Volunteer (unpaid)

_____ Paid Volunteer

Survey--Page 2

Please rank order the following statements with 1 being "Most Important" and 10 rating an item is "Of Little Importance."

The factors affecting my decision to attend a tournament are:

_____ Budgetary Constraints

_____ The ability of my team to be competitive at this tournament.

_____ Past experience at this tournament.

_____ Non-forensics aspects of my job.

_____ Family obligations.

_____ Need to spend time on outside interests or hobbies.

_____ Non-academic work obligations.

_____ Religious beliefs.

_____ Tournament travel distance.

_____ Other (Please specify) _____ _____ _____

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:
0=Don't Know, 1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree or disagree
4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree.

_____ I have considered reducing my involvement in forensics/debate.
_____ I have considered getting out of forensics/debate.
_____ I have actively considered getting out of forensics or reducing my involvement (talked with university administration, applied for other positions).
_____ Forensics involves too much weekend work.
_____ Students are not as fun as they used to be to work with.
_____ The salary for people in forensics coaching is too low.
_____ I could do more to advance professionally by getting out of forensics.
_____ It would be better for my primary relationship (spouse/domestic partner) if I were out of forensics.
_____ It would be better for my family if I were out of forensics.
_____ It would be better for my children if I were out of forensics.
_____ Tournaments are too demanding physically (stress, long van rides, lack of

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sleep, judging for extended periods).

OPEN ENDED ITEMS

1. WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE GREATEST ADVANTAGES TO WORKING IN FORENSICS/DEBATE?

2. WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE GREATEST DISADVANTAGES OF WORKING IN FORENSICS/DEBATE?